

Miscellaneous

MEDICINE AS A CAREER FOR WOMEN

*Address by Sir Charles Sherrington at
the London School*

The inaugural address at the London (Royal Free Hospital) School of Medicine for Women was delivered on October 1 by Sir Charles Sherrington, O.M., President of the Royal Society. The dean of the school, Dame Louisa Aldrich-Blake, presided.

Sir Charles Sherrington said that he imagined that in this particular school, whatever might be the case in any other, all the students desired to enter the profession of medicine for no other reason than that medicine really appealed to them. That in itself was a pledge of enthusiasm, and no small asset to student and teacher alike. In the nature of things there were not so many callings open to women as to men, but medicine at least offered to women the opportunity of earning their living. Medicine had been termed a poor trade but a noble profession. Among the callings, medicine as a progressive science stood almost alone in its availability for women. The women who yearned to be in the mid-current of progress and to feel and understand and further that progress, could rest assured that medicine would give her the opportunity in the fullest and most satisfying ways. The existence of that school and its success showed that women's rightful place in medicine was won, not by aiming at the possession of man's particular qualities, but by applying to medical work her own womanly nature. The fact that women should enter and practise medicine freely was another evidence of a progressive profession.

Those who went first along any path found it more lonely and difficult than those who followed after, and the school did well to remember with pious honour those who had led the way. All new social adaptations came slowly.

"The convincing logic of your case stands plain to me," Sir Charles Sherrington concluded. "One of the things this school has proved is that women are well able to fulfil the expanding social duties that send them forth. Every case of sickness is not only a problem for medical science and art, but the suffering of a fellow creature,

and women at least will not forget that. There is a story of a man who, after being refused by a lady, entered a medical career to harden his heart! But it is wholly a mistake that medical routine tends to blunt the feelings. Egotism may harden the heart, but knowledge never. Medicine enhances compassion and instruments it. Pure science, it is true, is intellectual and abstract, like mathematics, but at the bedside the case is always concrete. Science teaches humility, and humility is close to sympathy. Sympathy armed with understanding is surely what medical women stand for. I would assure those who by reason of their enthusiasm for medicine enter upon it in this school, that their enthusiasm is well founded "

VIENNA AS A POST-GRADUATE CENTRE*

"My wife and I have been here over three months now, and as the first three weeks were spent in an exhaustive search for an apartment, we feel that we have seen the greater part of the city already. Our general impression is that for the number and quality of its beautiful buildings, it outclasses both London and Paris. We have hardly begun to see its art treasures, but the collections we have seen are very beautiful and are extraordinarily interesting.

"Unfortunately, the influence of post-war poverty is everywhere in evidence. This is especially noticeable in respect to the traffic, which may be compared in volume to that of any small Canadian town on an ordinary day. All the buildings are of stone, and they tell us that in pre-war days, they were all kept in a snowy white condition. Practically all of the large houses have been turned into apartment houses, to overcome the acute condition of overcrowding in the city. There are six million people in Austria, and nearly half of them are living in Vienna.

"The abundance, variety and excellence of their music is, I imagine, as good as it has always been reputed to be, for their twenty odd concert

* Abstract from a private letter written from Vienna, under date of November 7, 1925, by Dr. G. W. Abbott-Smith there at present engaged in post-graduate studies in medicine.